

Oral history with 17 year old white female, Jackson, Kentucky (Transcription)

The next excerpt is taken from W 100. Begin M20 B(6)

Q: Where did you go to school?

R: Well, I went to school at beach grove until I was in the fifth grade, and it was a three room school, approximately a hundred children. And it burned when I was in the fifth grade. So then they moved me to Highland, a bigger school. It had approximately twelve rooms, and there were approximately four hundred students going there. And then I went to () High. I was a sophomore and dropped out of school. And now I'm on the neighbor-

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hood Youth Corps finishing my high school diploma.

Q: So, are you going to take the GED, or how ...?

R; Yes. I've taken, took the GED and I only lack ten points having my diploma.

Q: Oh great! So how do you get the ten points, how do you ...?

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R: Well, I go back and I take-over, you know, what part, that, they's five parts to the test, what parts I've made the lowest on, and then I , until I get ten more extra points.

Q: Great. So that shouldn't really be too much of a problem.

R: No. It shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Q: Then what do you want to do after you do that?

R: Well, I thought I may go on to college, or then if they want me to work on here at the library, I will.

Q: Was it a couple of years ago, then, that you dropped-out?

R: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Q: Did, why did you drop-out? Were things getting too ...?

R: Well, yeah. My sophomore year's just got so rough on me I had six subjects, and it just got, I just got tired of going to school.

Q: What about your brothers and sisters, did they go to school in the county?

R: I have,yeah, they've all went to school in the county. Now I have one sister that's completed high school. And she's working over there at the Dairy Bar now. Of course her

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diploma hasn't done her very much good. She's been working there eight years, but all my other brothers and sisters just went to high school and quit.

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Q: What about your mom and dad? Did they go to school?

R: Yeah, they went to school in the county, but they didn't get their high school diploma. My mother went to the eighth grade, and my father went till the fifth.

Q: What does your dad do?

R: He works on, it's the Operation Mainstream, repairing houses.

Q: Is that a federally funded ...?

R; Yeah, it's through the OEO, and that kind ...

Q: Are there a lot of OEO projects in the county?

R: Yeah, mm-hmm, yeah. There's NYC, that's Neighborhood Youth Corps, Operation Mainstream, and Emergency Food, and they's several others.

Q: So it's really a God-send for some people.

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R: Yeah, () for.

Q: Is it a problem, I mean are there job problems?

R: Yeah, they are. If OEO, see they're talking about cutting out OEO.

Q: I know, I've heard that.

R: And if they are, if they do, that's going to lay, I'd say five-hundred people here in () County without jobs.

Q: What do you think'll, what could they do? I mean is there...?

R: There's no income. I mean there's no other thing for them to do! If they cut, I don't see, you know, 'cause there's most of them are middle-aged, and they're not old enough to draw old-age, and they're not really that sickly to get a disabled, and then they're not well enough to get a job in the factory.

Q: So some people were saying, some people I talked to yesterday,

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that were saying just, you know, they just should build some factories around.

R: Yeah.

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Q: So people can have jobs.

R: So people can have jobs, yeah, they should. And like this Neighborhood Youth Corps, see we don't have enough education to get, you know, a good job. There's fifty something of us on the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

Q: So do they pay you for the work that you do? Do they give you extra money, or how does that work?

R: Yeah, they pay us by the hour. We get dollar sixty an hour, and we're allowed to work 23 hours a week. No more than 23 hours a week. And then there's six hours of school we go.

Q: Do they pay you also the six hours of school?

R: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: That's great!

R: So we get 29 hours in a week. And we get paid every two weeks.

Q: What do you do here?

R: Me? Oh, I shelve books, I card books, I process books, I do just anything the librarians do, except I don't order books and that kind of thing.

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Q: Do you think you might want to go on and do some more ...?

R: Yeah, uh-huh. I do, yeah, I think I'd like to go on and take library science, and ...

Q: That's what I used to think I wanted to do. I worked, when I was in grade school, high school, I always worked in libraries. And I thought, you know, I want to go on. And I just, you know,

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I ended up, you know, teaching a little bit. But now I'm back and working here.

R: Well, I never, I never worked in a library, and I never really got to go into a library until I started high school, because I was in grade school, we didn't have a library. And I didn't get even to, you know, know what a library was like until I started to high school. And then I didn't use it that much. And I didn't know how to use a card catalog. I had nothing, no kind of experience with a library until I come over here. And I ...

Q: Do you think you'll go on and do some college work? That'll really help you, you know.

R: Yes, it will. Sure will. And I've been here eighteen months.

Q: Oh, that's great!

R: And I've enjoyed every bit of it.

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Q: Great!

R: And ...

Q: How does your family feel about what you do?

R: They like it. They think it's great. Because they, you know, because I have picked up so much since I have been here, you know, just from watching them work, and what they've told me, you know, and I've really picked up a lot of things.

Q: What about you said your dad worked on the operation mainstream--does your mom work?

R: No. My mom doesn't work, no. She's sickly, you know, she's not real disabled, but she's sickly. She has heart trouble. And my mom's fifty-three, and then Dad's fifty-one.

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Q: What did your dad do before Operation Mainstream?

R: Worked in the coal mines.

Q: I've talked to a lot of people with that.

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R; Before he worked in the coal mines, he worked in Newport, in a factory.

Q: Where's Newport? Is that ...?

R: In, it's in Campbell County. And he worked down there for about eight or nine years.

Q: Did he have any, I've talked to a lot of people who've said, you know, like their parents are disabled. Like their fathers are disabled 'cause the coal mine accidents and everything. Does your dad have any trouble?

R: No, no. No, he didn't have any trouble like that. But now my grandfather was blown up in the coal mines. But he lived to be ninety-six. And he's only been dead three years. And you know, he got blown up and he had rocks in his legs, and everything, you know, under the skin. And he ended up having to have one of his legs taken off. But, you know, we was thankful that he lived as long as he did.

Q: Did your grandmother live long, too?

R: My what?

Q: Your grandmother.

R: Well, my grandfather was married six times. And I never knew, I mean, I never got to see my grandma, my real grandma. But my step-grandma is still living. And, but I never did remember my grandma. And then on my mother's side of the group, I never did see my grandpa or grandma. On her side.

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Q: Did you remember your grandparents, like, you know, your grandpa, telling about things, how they were when he was growing up in the county?

R: No, I never did get to associate that much with my grandfather you know, because he was sickly and he didn't talk very much. And I never, you know, got to associate with him that much. But, I've heard my dad talk, you know.

Q: What were some of the things you've heard?

R; I've heard Mommy say that back when she was small they only, you know, got biscuits once the week, and that was on Sunday morning. And for every other morning they ate cornbread. And I can remember my daddy a-talking about how they'd have to work in the corn fields. And he used to work for fifty cents a day, before. And how he'd have to walk, you know, in and out to work. And I was raised in a hollow about three miles off the road. We'd have to walk in to school and out. And just a little narrow path, you just barely could get through. We'd slide in the creek. Of course in the summer that was fun to us, you know. But then in the winter we'd slide into the creek and just about freeze to death before, you know, you'd get to school.

Q: Did you have a little spot of land for a garden or anything?

R: Yeah. We had a garden, and we tended a garden. And we tended tobacco until after all the family got away from home. But now we don't, you know. We just have a garden now, but we don't tend one. We owned the home up in the hollow until I was in the second

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grade. Then we moved out and started renting. And we rented for about five years. Then we bought us another piece

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another piece of land, and we sold our other home, and my Daddy built our own home now. He started in August and we moved in in December.

Q: Did he do all the work himself?

Q: He done all the work himself, him and my brother. And we been living where we living now six years, and we have, we've completed eight rooms. Basement, and we've got inside bath and water, and my dad's done all this work hisself. Besides he worked every day on a public job.

Q: That's amazing. Are you, you know, obviously he knows how to do that kind of work if he's been working with repairing ...

R: Yeah, uh-huh. He knows how, you know, he's done all of his work himself. Except now he didn't do his plumbing. My brother did that for him.

Q: Is your brother a plumber, or did he just ...?

R: No, oh he just knew how to do that. He used to, he's a mechanic, my brother is. But he just knew how to do it. He's not a plumber' But he done it for us. So the family, just together it's a beautiful home.

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Q: That's wonderful. Do you think your mom and dad will keep that, will live in that house here?

R: Yeah, this'll be their home, you know, until something happens. Yeah, we'll live there from now on.

Q: What about, I was thinking about what there is around for young kids, you know, entertainment or recreation, or what do young kids do, you know, kids your age?

R: They have, well, once to week, they call it young people's

meetings. And they run this little van around, pick up the you people, and they take them to the church, and they play games and they have dances and that kind of thing.

Q: Is this just up in your area? Or is it down here in town, too?

R: No. This is, now this is up in my area. From canoe, and up Sebastian's Branch, you know, and up. There's people up around there. And then over here in town, they have the same thing, you know. And they have, some go to the gym down here at (and play ball, and that kind of thing.

Q: Do you, this program and all with the van, does the church sponsor that?

R: Yeah, the church, uh-huh, the church sponsors that. And they have, a little preacher drives the truck, you know, and takes them. Yeah, it's really nice.

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Q: Is that sort of the way most young kids get together, you know, meet each other?

R: Yeah, that's kind of it, yeah. That's the way most of them. And then, you know, during the season, you know, they have ball games they come to over here. And they have the races. Have you heard about the races? They have, you know up here at Farm, they have a race track. And at Lost Creek they have a race track.

Q: What, horses or cars?

R: No, car races. And then in Booneville they have a race track for horses.

Q: And do a lot of people go to them?

R: Oh, I've never been to them, () Farm or up at Lost Creek